



## Press Release

### HCL and SRFI Announce PSA Challenger Tour in Chennai

*Commencing on March 27, tournament will be held in a 'bio-secure environment' ensuring safe playing conditions*

*Players from eight countries including Canada, Egypt, and USA to compete in the tournament*

**Chennai, March 25, 2021:** HCL, a leading global conglomerate, today announced the return of the HCL-SRFI Indian Tour, a (Professional Squash Association) PSA Challenger tour under the HCL Squash Podium Program, to be held in Chennai. The tournament will be hosted at the **Indian Squash Academy, Chennai** between March 27 – 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. The PSA Challenger tour is a part of the HCL Squash Podium Program - a joint initiative by HCL and Squash Rackets Federation of India (SRFI), offering Indian players opportunities to improve their international rankings as well as compete against the world's best players at the home turf. The tournament will witness participation from around 50 players from eight different countries, including India, Canada, Egypt, France, Japan, Russia, Spain, and The United States. Players will compete for a prize money of \$20K for men and \$12K for women. This event is supported by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and Sports Authority of India.

The first HCL-SRFI Indian Tour to be hosted since the pandemic, the five-day championship will take place under strict COVID-19 protocols. All players and officials will be allowed movement within a bio-bubble (a secure perimeter including players' hotel and match venue) to minimize the risk of COVID-19 infection. Participants will be tested prior to traveling to the tournament and then twice (26<sup>th</sup> March and 29<sup>th</sup> March) upon arrival. Entry to the venue will be limited to a select number and will be by invite only. To ensure that Squash enthusiasts do not miss out on the opportunity to see their favourite players in action, all matches will be streamed live on SRFI Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/indiasquash](http://www.facebook.com/indiasquash)) and HCL & India Squash YouTube channels ([youtube.com/user/HCLEnterprise](http://youtube.com/user/HCLEnterprise) and [youtube.com/c/IndiaSquash](http://youtube.com/c/IndiaSquash) respectively).

With a world ranking of No.47, Mahesh Mangaonkar from India will be the top seed for the men's draw, and Sunayna Kuruvilla (India, World Rank - 69) will lead the women's draw. The other top-seeded players at the tournament will include Todd Harrity (USA, World Rank – 55) and Karim El Hammamy (Egypt, Rank- 59) in men's category; and Hana Moataz (Egypt, World Rank – 75) and Tanvi Khanna (India, World Rank- 110) in women's category.

Talking about the initiative, **Sundar Mahalingam, Chief Strategy Officer of HCL Corporation** said, "We are delighted to bring back the HCL SRFI Indian Tour, with support from the Government. This will be the first PSA Challenger Tour event in the world after a pandemic-induced break and we look forward to seeing the players



*back in action. This will not just help boost their international rankings but will also help enhance their game and skills for future championships.”*

**Cyrus Poncha, Secretary- General, SRFI said,** *“The pandemic caused a major disruption in the sports sector with countries sealing their borders and deferring all sports to control the spread of COVID-19. No major tournament was organized in the last year and therefore, our excitement for the upcoming HCL SRFI Indian Tour is natural. This tournament is being organized keeping in mind the Government’s decision to start sporting events; however, with no major attendance as well as the COVID-19 protocols. It is also in line with our mission to prepare players for the upcoming 2022 Commonwealth Games and Asian Games. I am looking forward to some exciting matches over the next five days and wish all the players the best of luck”.*

HCL has been supporting Squash in the country for over four years now with programs for both senior and junior players. The HCL Squash Podium Program was launched in May 2019 by HCL in partnership with SRFI to significantly improve the Squash ecosystem in the country. The multi-pronged program is focused on driving a 360-degree overhaul in Indian Squash by improving both players (senior and junior) and coaching standards and enhancing the overall prominence of the sport in the country. So far, HCL has hosted PSA tournaments in the National Capital Region, Chennai, Mumbai and Jaipur. As part of the HCL Squash Podium program, HCL also hosted a High-Performance camp in June 2019 with support from SRFI. This camp provided intensive training to 32 junior players, who were selected to represent India at the Asian and World Championships under British coach – Chris Ryder.

#### **About HCL**

*Founded in 1976 as one of India’s original IT garage start-ups, HCL is a pioneer of modern computing with many firsts to its credit, including the introduction of the 8-bit microprocessor-based computer in 1978 well before its global peers. Today, the HCL enterprise has a presence across varied sectors that include technology, healthcare and talent management solutions and comprises three companies – HCL Infosystems, HCL Technologies and HCL Healthcare. The enterprise generates annual revenues of over US \$ 10 billion with more than 159,000 employees operating across 50 countries. For further information, visit [www.hcl.com](http://www.hcl.com)*

#### **About SRFI**

*The Squash Rackets Federation of India (SRFI) was formed to oversee the promotion and development of the sport in India. The SRFI has more than 20 state associations and affiliated units with its headquarters in Chennai. The federation is affiliated to World Squash Federation / Asian Squash Federation & recognized by Government. of India. SRFI has been forging ahead with dynamic plans ensuring promotion, development and performance of the sport at all levels.*

**For further information, please contact:**

On behalf of HCL:  
Sadaf Khan – 09620696668/ [sadaf-k@hcl.com](mailto:sadaf-k@hcl.com)